Days & Years

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Days & Years

by hkafterdark

Summary

> Kibum pushed himself up, still looking irritated, and rearranged himself into a sitting position. “What *are* you doing here?”
>
> “You said you missed me,” Minho said.

Notes

> At last I have arrived bearing gifts of the SHINee persuasion. This fic was inspired by two things: Key commenting "I miss you honey" on Minho's instagram and Key making his own kimchi. Thanks to hawkwrrdly for letting me bounce ideas off her and for doing some much needed editing. Title is from the SHINee song because I'm a basic bitch and you cannot convince me those lyrics are not extreme minkey vibes.
>
> A note: the canon compliant tag is meant to indicate that this takes place in our 2021, so while grief is not at the forefront of this story, it is part of it. There are also a few flashbacks to SHINee's early days that feature all the members, as well as a passing reference to past self-harm. If you want more specifics, you can message me on twitter or curiouscat.

Minho knew Kibum was home when CommeDes and Garcons both jerked around, ears twitching. CommeDes jumped down, looking around at his brother for a moment before setting off for the door. A moment later, Kibum started talking, a little too quiet for Minho to make out, but from the tone he knew Kibum was baby-talking his precious dog.

"—you lonely? Where's your brother?" Kibum rounded the corner with CommeDes at his heels. Garcons wiggled out of Minho's lap, letting out a little yip of joy as he leapt down and ran to join them. Kibum, who was too busy filming them with his phone, didn't even look up. "Ah, there he is!"

Minho waited a few more seconds, then cleared his throat. "Kim Kibum," he said in his deepest voice.

Kibum's head jerked up, wild-eyed. "Ai!" he shrieked, throwing his phone at Minho. "Choi Minho! What are you doing here?"

Minho managed to catch the phone, though it stung his palm, and collapsed back in a fit of laughter as Kibum stomped over to him. He held up his arms as Kibum began to pummel him. "Ah, ah, stop!"

"Stop laughing! I thought you were a robber!" Kibum grabbed one of the decorative cushions and shoved it into Minho's face. Minho sputtered, trying to push it away, but Kibum was a lot stronger than he looked. He got his free hand around Kibum's wrist and pulled him away with some effort until the pillow fell into his lap.

CommeDes and Garcons were running in circles in front of the couch, looking from Kibum to Minho with expressions so like concern that Minho started laughing again. Kibum scowled and lunged at him, pressing his other hand over Minho's mouth. Minho licked his palm.

"Ha, nice try," Kibum said darkly. "That stopped working ten years ago."

Minho set Kibum's phone aside, then seized Kibum around the middle and wrestled him down to the sofa. Kibum flailed against him, cursing, until Minho sat on top of him and said, "Yah! Is this how you treat your guests?"

"When did I invite you?" Kibum shot back. He shoved at Minho. "Get off, you're crushing me."

Minho flexed his arm, knowing it would make Kibum groan and roll his eyes. "Do you promise to stop hitting me?"

"Unless you deserve it," Kibum said, which was as good as Minho was going to get. Satisfied, he scooted off and leaned back with a sigh. Kibum pushed himself up, still looking irritated, and rearranged himself into a sitting position. "What *are* you doing here?"

"You said you missed me," Minho said.

"And you thought that meant you should scare the shit out of me?"

Minho stroked his chin with his best thinking face. “Mm—yes.”

“Ah, fuck you, I take it back, I don’t miss you at all.” Kibum stood and went over to CommeDes and Garcons. “And you two! Some guard dogs you are.”

“They love me,” Minho said. “Anyway, you gave me the passcode.”

Kibum made a face, but Minho could see the way his mouth was twitching with the effort of hiding his smile. “I didn’t mean for you to use it to *stalk* me.”

“If you want me to leave—” Minho said, starting to stand.

“Don’t be stupid, you’re here already,” Kibum said dismissively. “Are you hungry? Why am I asking, of course you are. I don’t have the ingredients to make Korean food, so you’ll have to settle.”

“You don’t have to feed me,” Minho said, a little guiltily. “I can grab something later, or order for us—”

“Aish, just make yourself useful,” Kibum said. “The babies need to get fed soon. Check their water for me and refill their bowls.”

Minho did as he was told and grinned as the dogs came running. He crouched down to ruffle their fur and sprinkle kisses over their faces. Garcons licked nearly inside his nose and he sputtered, laughing as he pushed him away. “Kibum-ssi, your dogs are trying to get frisky with me!”

“Mm, honey, don’t think too highly of yourself,” Kibum called from the kitchen. “They’ll kiss anyone who feeds them.”

“Don’t take this away from me,” Minho said. “Your babies love me and you know it.”

“Whatever. If you’re done getting to second base with my dogs, come help me make dinner.” Kibum stepped out into the hall and gestured imperiously with a knife. “I wasn’t expecting company, so we’ll have to improvise. I don’t want to hear any complaints from you.”

“Why would I complain? You’re an excellent cook.” Minho pushed himself upright and followed Kibum back into the kitchen. “Okay, chef! What’s first?”

“Ah, you’re so—” Kibum waved his non-knife-wielding hand toward the sink and the colander inside it. “Wash the vegetables. I’ll deal with the salmon.”

Minho took a look. “It’s a good thing Taemin isn’t here,” he said, lifting up one of the cucumbers and flicking on the faucet. “Have you seen those videos of cats getting scared by cucumbers?”

“Maybe I should hang them around my apartment,” Kibum said darkly. “At least he can’t break in while he’s enlisted. Aish, that boy. I blame you!”

“Me?” Minho flicked water at Kibum. “As if. You’re the one who babies him and lets him get away with everything.”

“Ah well,” Kibum said, “he’s just so cute, how can I not?” He put the knife down for a pair of tweezers, delicately deboning the two cuts of salmon he had out. “When you’re done washing the cucumbers, slice them very thin and put them back in the colander with a bunch of salt.”

“Salt?”

“Who’s the chef here?”

Minho got through the slicing with only minimal criticism from Kibum on his technique, then spent longer than Kibum liked mincing garlic and ginger. Kibum hovered at his shoulder like he was going to snatch the knife away. Minho couldn’t decide if he wanted to slow down just to fuck with him or if he should really go for it the way chefs did on cooking shows. He settled for hip-checking Kibum away. The back of his neck felt cold without Kibum breathing against it.

They took a break while the salmon marinated and the cucumbers sat in their salt bath. Kibum took out an unopened bottle of Zinfandel and poured them each a glass while explaining to Minho why it was the best red to drink with fish. Minho listened without really taking any of it in, content just to let Kibum’s voice wash over him.

“It’s nice,” Minho offered when Kibum looked at him expectantly. “Very drinkable.”

Kibum rolled his eyes. Minho took another sip of wine to hide his smile; there was no way Kibum didn’t know Minho was fucking with him, and yet he still let him do it. “I don’t know why I bother,” Kibum said with a sniff. He topped off Minho’s glass and stood. “The fish should be ready to cook.”

Minho was assigned to wring the water out of the cucumber slices while Kibum pan-seared the salmon and gave him directions on how to make a cucumber salad. Minho kept getting distracted by the flex of Kibum’s slender wrist as he wielded the spatula, the shape of his fingers along the handle. Imagining pressing his lips to Kibum’s pulse.

“Minho-ssi, are you listening? Get the plates!” Kibum flicked the dish towel at him. “Aish, this guy.”

“There aren’t any cameras here,” Minho said. “Who are you talking to?”

“How do you know there aren’t cameras?” Kibum asked with a sniff. “I’m a reality television star.”

“You’d have told me by now if they were filming,” Minho said. “You’d be showing off even more, too.”

“Just get me the plates,” Kibum said.

The sun had just started to set, turning the entire room warm and golden. The dogs came chasing after them, circling around Kibum's ankles expectantly. Kibum shooed them away with a gentle nudge of his foot, gracefully side-stepping CommeDes's attempts to jump up.

Minho oohed over the plates when Kibum set them down, admiring the contrast between the warm pink of the salmon and the cool green of the salad. "These look so professional. You should go on one of those cooking shows," he said. "Too bad Jungsoo-hyung doesn't host *Best Cooking Secrets* anymore."

"You should make a mukbang channel," Kibum shoots back. "With how much you eat. It's like you're still a teenager."

"I'm a growing boy," Minho said. He waited for Kibum to sit, then lifted his wine glass. "Geonbae!"

Kibum's mouth twitched up. He tapped his glass gently against Minho's. "Geonbae," he said.

Minho picked up his chopsticks and dug into the salmon. "Mhm!" he said, eyes widening. "This is good!"

"Is it?" Kibum asked in the tone of voice that meant he knew very well that it was good and just wanted to hear Minho compliment him.

"This is delicious, Kibum-ssi," Minho said sincerely. "The only thing—the *only* thing—that would make it better?"

"What's that?"

"Kimchi," Minho said. He grinned as Kibum scrunched up his face in annoyance. "What? You know I like Korean flavors."

"Aish, I told you I didn't have the ingredients. I did my best to make it to your exacting taste. Look, the salad is like namasu, that's similar."

"And I appreciate it," Minho said. "I just like kimchi."

"Fine. Next time, let me know before you come over and I'll make some for you."

"Next time?" Minho asked before the second part of what Kibum said sunk in. "You'll *make* kimchi?"

"Of course next time, you have my code," Kibum said. "And why do you look so skeptical? I can make kimchi. I used to help my grandmother make it every winter."

"I believe you," Minho said. "It's just very—domestic." He was thinking of his own grandmother telling him her kimchi was what had made his grandfather fall in love with her; of his mother in the kitchen massaging the cabbage while his father cooked; of his sister-in-law and her first miserable attempt at making it for Minsuk, who put on a brave face and ate it anyway.

“Shut up,” Kibum said, a faint blush rising in his cheeks. “I was going to do it anyway.”

“All right,” Minho said.

“I *was*.”

“I believe you,” Minho said again, starting to laugh. “Why are you so defensive?”

“Why are *you* so annoying?” Kibum shot back. He reached across the table and picked up some cucumber, holding it to Minho’s mouth. “Shut up and eat.”

Minho grinned and ate from Kibum’s chopsticks. “Okay, hyung.”

Kibum rolled his eyes. “Don’t try to use aegyo on me.”

“Okay, hyung,” Minho said again, half-singing it this time. Kibum kicked him under the table.

They caught up while they ate, Minho sharing stories from the set of the drama he was filming and Kibum dropping hints about what might be on the next *Amazing Saturday* episode. Kibum complained about Taemin not texting him back enough, to which Minho retorted that it served him right after Kibum ghosted him for two years.

“I didn’t *ghost* you,” Kibum protested. “I just didn’t want to hang out.”

“Ouch,” Minho said.

“You know what I mean,” Kibum said. “I needed the break.”

Minho pressed his lips together, hurt even though he did know exactly what Kibum meant. In truth, by the time he had enlisted, a part of him had been relieved. For ten years, the five of them had all lived in and out of each other’s pockets; even when they had started moving out of the dorm, they saw each other all the time. And he loved them, he really did, but a decade of shared history with no chance to breathe took its toll.

Being in the military had clarified things. Put everything in perspective: his grief, his frustration, his love, his goals. There was that popular theory about how focusing on something mundane freed your mind up to solve your bigger problems. Spending almost two years entirely focused on improving his body, with a steady routine and few decisions to make had been—restful.

Minho was pretty sure that if he said that to Kibum, he’d be laughed out of the room.

“Did you even miss me?” Minho asked. It came out plaintive, too soft. Minho never had been very good at hiding his feelings.

Kibum dropped his gaze to his plate and pushed one of his chopsticks into a cucumber slice. “Of course I did,” he said, very quietly. “I missed all of you. I just thought—I was afraid that if we did hang out, it would have made it worse.”

Minho blinked hard at the sudden prickling of his eyes. “Kibum-ssi,” he said.

“Don’t.” Kibum clicked his tongue. “Ah, look at you. So embarrassing.” He picked up a piece of salmon and held it to Minho’s mouth. “Eat.”

Minho reached out and wrapped his hand around Kibum’s wrist to keep him steady. He met Kibum’s eyes. Kibum arched his eyebrows, egging him on. Minho pulled Kibum’s hand forward until he could close his lips around the chopsticks. He hardly tasted the fish; he was too busy watching Kibum.

“Stop that,” Kibum said.

“Stop what?”

“Staring,” Kibum said. “I know I’m devastatingly attractive, but you’re creeping me out.”

“Aigoo, this guy.” Minho shook his head in mock disgust. “You think very highly of yourself.”

Kibum snorted and mimed tossing hair over his shoulder. “You know it, honey,” he said in English before winking.

It was always like this with them, walking the line of teasing and flirtation. Kibum was usually the first to start it, and always the first to end it. Which really could sum up the entirety of their relationship, Minho thought wryly to himself. After all, in the brief period of time where they’d been something more than just friends, it was Kibum who’d kissed him first, and it was Kibum who’d decided that they should stop.

He was sure Jinki had never picked up on it—he hadn’t even noticed the Song-Song couple falling in love right under his nose—and while Taemin probably had, he had always chosen to act oblivious. Jonghyun was the only one to have ever said anything to Minho about it, and even then only obliquely. “Be careful with Kibum,” he’d said once after seeing Minho leaving Kibum’s room with swollen lips and tousled hair. “He carries things deeply.”

It took a while for Minho to fully understand what he meant, because at first glance Kibum was an open book. He was so expressive and loud. He never shut up. He never hesitated to share his opinion, no matter how blunt or brutal it was. And he could be lavish with praise too, and with affection—but the moment he felt observed or vulnerable, a mask of performative irony would fall over him.

After being discharged, Minho had been so sure that now would be the time to revisit that boundary. But even after thirteen years, he couldn’t always predict what would make Kibum retreat. And he kept retreating.

Frankly, Minho was sick of it.

Kibum changed the subject then, asking if Minho had seen the latest clip of Jinki on *Sea of Hope*, joking that he was becoming a real variety show star. Minho let him do it, not ready to

push just yet. When they finished eating, Kibum got up and starting collecting their plates. Minho intercepted him before he could get far.

“Hey, no—you cooked, I’ll get the dishes.” Minho made a shooing motion. Kibum arched his eyebrows, but didn’t say anything, just followed Minho to the kitchen.

Minho pulled on Kibum’s rubber gloves and started rinsing the plates. Kibum leaned against the counter beside him, watching Minho over his shoulder, almost coy. Minho held off for a solid thirty seconds before he gave in and flicked suds at Kibum’s face.

Kibum sputtered and squawked, “Choi Minho!” before lunging at him. Minho managed to splash him again before Kibum had him pinned against the counter. Kibum cupped a hand under the running faucet and flung an entire palmful of water into Minho’s face.

“Yah!” Minho yelled, shaking the water from his eyes. “Kibum-ssi—”

“You started it,” Kibum said before throwing another handful of water at him.

Water ran down Minho’s beck and beneath the collar of his shirt, the coolness almost shocking. Minho went to push Kibum away and abruptly took stock of their positions; how Kibum was pressed against him from knee to hip, his leg slipping between Minho’s to keep him pinned in place. How Kibum’s hair was sticking to his forehead, and how the hollow of this throat shone with dampness.

Kibum noticed a second later and immediately drew back. His mouth curled into a half-smile. “Didn’t you mother teach you to be a good guest?” he asked. He reached past Minho to wipe his hand on a tea towel. “What kind of behavior is this?”

He was doing it again. Minho thoughtlessly grabbed Kibum by the waist and pulled him closer. Kibum wasn’t expecting it, falling into Minho and knocking the air from both of them. Minho kept his arm around Kibum’s waist and stared down at him. His chest was tight.

“What’s this?” Kibum asked after a moment. He squirmed a little, testing Minho’s grip. Then he leaned back so he could look Minho in the eyes. “If you’re going to splash me again, could you be more careful? This shirt is dry clean only and I—”

Minho kissed him.

Kibum responded instantly, mouth opening as he sank into the kiss. It was just the same as ten years ago, except now they had experience to add to their enthusiasm. Minho regretted not removing the rubber gloves first; he wanted to touch Kibum.

Kibum bit at Minho’s lower lip, then drew back, eyes hard and narrowed. “Minho,” he said, a warning edge to his voice. “We aren’t eighteen anymore.”

“I know,” Minho said.

“It isn’t like I’ve sat around pining for you,” Kibum said.

“I know,” Minho said again. “I didn’t think you were.”

“Then what?” Kibum demanded, finally wriggling his way free of Minho’s embrace. “You can’t use the ‘just curious’ excuse anymore, I *know* you know what it’s like to kiss a boy.”

“Aigoo, is it so unbelievable that I just wanted to kiss you?” Minho asked.

“Ha!” Kibum stalked off to the fridge and produced a bottle of soju. “I need to be drunker than this if you expect me to believe that you’ve been nursing a—a, what, a crush? Please.”

“Would that be so bad?” Minho snapped.

“Yes!” Kibum exclaimed.

“Why?”

“Because!” Kibum took a glass from his cabinet and slammed it down. “It’s been ten fucking years and I think about it all the time!”

“So do I,” Minho said.

“Bullshit.” Kibum poured himself a shot of soju, knocked it back, and poured another one. Minho reached out to stop him from drinking that one too. “You’ve never said anything.”

“*You’re* the one who ended it,” Minho reminded him. “Why would I bring it up? I’m sorry, okay? I’m sorry I kissed you, I’m sorry that I want to kiss you, I’m sorry that I ever let you kiss me in the first place!”

“*Let* me? Ha!” Key stabbed a finger into Minho’s chest. “What, were you taking pity on the little gay idol? Giving him a taste of what he couldn’t have?”

“No!” Minho hated arguing with Kibum, at least when it was real—they bickered all the time, but when they got into it like this, it was like they were mismatched puzzle pieces bumping together. And Minho got *so frustrated* every time because why couldn’t Kibum just listen to him? *Actually* listen? “I wanted to kiss you, I *liked* kissing you.”

“That doesn’t mean you should!” Kibum twisted his face into a nasty expression. “We aren’t a couple. We aren’t *in love*.”

“It would be okay,” Minho said. “If you were in love with me.”

“*Okay*,” Kibum said mockingly. “Of course it would be, who doesn’t like being loved?”

“I mean that—” Minho grabbed Kibum’s wrist before he could grab his soju again. “Stop it, will you just listen to me? You idiot, I’m trying to say that I’m in love with you.”

“Ha!” Kibum yanked his arm away. “Come on, Minho-ssi. You’re just saying that because you—”

“I thought about you every day,” Minho said loudly. “While I was in Pohang. Every fucking day. When you stopped responding to my texts—” Minho had to stop and take a breath. “Kibum, it broke my heart.”

“Aish, you’re so dramatic,” Kibum said, but his voice had gone softer, hardly any bite to it. “We were always going to see each other again.”

“I know,” Minho said. “But it felt like I was losing you.”

Kibum looked actually stricken at that, the color leaving his cheeks as he stared up at Minho. “It wasn’t—I couldn’t. I *couldn’t*.”

“I know,” Minho said for what felt like the millionth time that night. “Kibum-ssi, I know. But when we were apart—”

They were both well aware that if they’d met any way other than being put into SHINee, there was no way they’d be friends. They were too different, and far too stubborn. Minho had thought maybe—maybe the distance had led Kibum to realize that there was nothing to hold them together. That without the other members around, without shows to record and concerts to perform, there was no reason for them to speak.

Enlistment had been a reprieve from being Minho of SHINee, but that didn’t mean his members weren’t still his anchor. He had clung to them as tight as he could, terrified at the idea of drifting apart after all they’d been through. They were his brothers, his best friends, the people he adored most in the world, and when Kibum had stopped replying, he had realized that yes, he loved Kibum. That despite their differences, he couldn’t imagine life without him.

“I missed you,” Minho said finally.

There was a brief, charged silence. Then, moving with deliberate slowness, Kibum set the soju glass down, then turned to face Minho directly. Without looking up, he took Minho’s gloved hands in his and began to tug the gloves off.

“You,” Kibum said, voice low, “are the most annoying person I have ever met.” He dropped one glove to the floor, then started on the other. “I wish I didn’t love you so damn much.”

It took Minho a moment to process what Kibum had just said. When the meaning registered, he grabbed Kibum’s hands tight and held on until he looked up. “You mean that?”

“Aish, now who isn’t believing who?” Kibum demanded. He was slowly turning pink, color rising up his neck to his ears. “Don’t make me say it again.”

“No, I think I want to hear you say it,” Minho said. “Properly.”

Kibum rolled his eyes before shutting them tight. “Okay, but I’m not looking at you while I do.” He took a deep breath, fingers flexing nervously in Minho’s grip. “Choi Minho, I love you.”

Minho started to laugh. Kibum’s eyes snapped open and he started to struggle, swearing, until Minho said, in between bursts of laughter, “Kim Kibum, I love you so fucking much,” and kissed him again.

It was strange how familiar it was; even though their bodies had changed, they fit together just the same. Kibum sighed just the same when Minho wrapped his arms around his waist; Minho shivered just the same when Kibum scraped his fingers along the nape of his neck. Minho knew how Kibum liked to be kissed, slow and deep, a little messy. He was sensitive along his lower back; he shivered when Minho pushed up his shirt to touch his bare skin.

They made out like that for a while, the kitchen counter steadily digging into Minho's ass, Kibum pushing in more and more until Minho knocked his head against the cabinets. Kibum broke away laughing, sliding his hand up to cradle Minho's head.

"You okay, baby?" Kibum asked in English, a heavily flirtatious lilt in his voice.

"Yah," Minho said with no real heat behind it. "Are you trying to concuss me?"

Kibum rolled his eyes. "Aish, so dramatic. Guess that means you're all right." He eased back, dropping his hand to link with Minho's. "Come on."

"On a first date?" Minho joked as Kibum opened his bedroom door and led him inside.

Kibum threw him an arch look. "We can take it slow if you'd prefer."

"If you really think about it, we've taken, what, twelve years?" Minho toed off his guest slippers and pushed Kibum toward the bed. "How much slower can we go?"

"You want to count that?" Kibum took hold of Minho's shirt and started to push it up. "I don't remember you wining and dining me."

"No," Minho said, "but we definitely kissed a lot." When the other members were out, in the rare moments they had a moment to themselves, crammed into the corner of venue where no one would look for them. Never more than that, even when their hands wandered.

Kibum snorted. "We were so fucking stupid." He pulled Minho's shirt off and paused, looking him over. "Ah, look at this," he said, tracing his fingers over Minho's chest. "You haven't gotten your hair removed in a while." He pinched a strand of hair and yanked.

"Ow!" Minho smacked Kibum's hand away, laughing incredulously. "What was that?"

Kibum raised his eyebrows at Minho, smirking. "And this too," he said, touching Minho's jaw, just barely stubbled. "If you just got it lasered, you wouldn't have to shave."

Minho rolled his eyes and reached for Kibum's shirt. "Next time I'll be sure I'm as silky smooth as tofu."

"Nah." Kibum dropped his gaze, ears going pink. "Don't bother."

Minho paused with his hands on the tiny buttons of Kibum's shirt—why did he wear things like this?—and leaned in to rub his cheek against Kibum's. Kibum groaned and shoved at him.

"If you give me beard burn, I'll kill you," he said. "And so will the make-up noonas."

“I’m sure they’ve had to cover up worse,” Minho said. “Imagine what the crew for *Men on a Mission* have to deal with.”

“Because of Heechul-hyung?” Kibum laughed, then made a face. “Ugh, don’t make me think about that. Come on, already, do you need help or something? They work like normal buttons.”

“Shut up,” Minho said. He finally managed to get the last of Kibum’s fiddly buttons and watched as Kibum removed and folded it neatly.

“What?” Kibum said when he caught Minho watching. “I told you, it’s a nice shirt.”

“It is,” Minho agreed. “I like what’s under it better.” He made a show of dragging his gaze up Kibum’s body, taking in the lithe muscle and soft, pale stomach.

Kibum groaned and said, “You need to stop talking,” before hauling Minho in for another kiss.

They took a pause to finish stripping down. Minho nearly fell over trying to get out of his jeans, making Kibum cackle hysterically from where he had stretched out on the bed, his own trousers already off and folded at the other end. Minho pointed at them.

“Those are going to get kicked off,” he said.

“Ooh, someone’s confident.” Kibum smirked. “But your concern is noted. Put them on the floor with the shirt.”

Minho made a point of bending over as he did so and was rewarded with Kibum’s scowl when he straightened up. Minho grinned at him and made a show of tensing his abs.

“You’re disgusting,” Kibum said flatly. “Come here already.”

And this—this was different. They had never done this before, stretched out with almost nothing between them. Minho reveled in the freedom to touch, to feel every inch of Kibum. He tried to keep himself braced above Kibum even as they kissed, not wanting to drop all his weight, but Kibum impatiently grabbed at his shoulder and pulled until Minho was completely on top of him.

Kibum’s bare thigh hooked over his, dragging him in until Minho was completely enwrapped in Kibum’s legs, their cocks pressed together. Minho let out a hissing breath as the friction dragged his briefs against his cock. Every time Kibum shifted beneath him, he shuddered.

Kibum turned his head to kiss Minho’s ear. “You’re sensitive today,” he murmured. “I don’t remember you getting this excited when we were eighteen.”

“I never took off my jeans when we were eighteen,” Minho said. He kissed the underside of Kibum’s jaw, down to his neck. “We took care of that stuff separately.”

“Did we?” Kibum asked coyly. “You left and jerked off to me?”

“Fuck you,” Minho breathed. He dragged his tongue into the hollow of Kibum’s throat. “As if you didn’t do the same.”

Kibum didn’t deny it. Minho couldn’t see his face, but just knew Kibum was grinning. “Only because I thought you’d run screaming if I’d asked you to touch my dick.”

“I wouldn’t have,” Minho said. The first time, maybe, but once he’d realized it was a possibility, he’d started thinking about it and never really stopped.

“Well, now’s your chance.” Kibum walked his fingers to the waistband of Minho’s briefs, dipping beneath to palm his ass. “So are you going to follow through?”

Minho *knew* he was being baited. He knew it. But he was already sliding down Kibum’s body, tracing his fingers over the Kibum’s ribs, down to his delicate waist. He kissed the hollow of Kibum’s hip, tongued along the crease of his thigh. Minho carefully he eased off Kibum’s briefs, mouth dry.

Kibum waxed; it wasn’t a surprise, really, but it was still startling to touch the smooth, smooth skin, feeling as though his fingers would slip right off. Minho took Kibum’s cock in his hand, the dark pink head wet against his palm. Minho growled, startled by how triumphant he felt, how having Kibum arch beneath him made him feel *powerful*.

“Minho-ssi,” Kibum said, voice catching when Minho squeezed. “Ah—*ah*. Stop, stop one second.”

Minho immediately let go, frowning. “Everything okay?”

“Yeah, just give me one second—” Kibum twisted under him, contorting himself into a curve as he reached toward the side of the bed. A moment later he flung down a half-empty bottle of lube at Minho.

“Really?” Minho asked, eyes wide.

Kibum rolled his eyes. “No ass-fucking tonight,” Kibum said. “I wasn’t exactly expecting—this, and I like to be a little better prepared when I get fucked.”

Minho felt a little like screaming. “Then what’s this for?”

“Come on, like you’ve never jerked off with something to smooth the way,” Kibum scoffed. “I don’t want to chafe.”

“Oh,” Minho said, deflating a little. Then again, there were so many other things he wanted to do aside from fucking Kibum until he couldn’t speak. It was fine to work up to it; he could wait.

“But,” Kibum continued, eyes glinting, “I have a clean bill of health, and I know you do too, because if you didn’t you’d have gotten a lecture, so—" He dangled a condom packet in front of Minho’s face. “We can consider this optional for tonight’s events.”

Minho took the condom from Kibum’s hand and threw it as far as he could from the bed.

“Mm, okay honey.” Kibum’s smile turned smug and sharklike. “Let’s get messy.”

After popping open the lube and getting them both wet, Minho had to admit that Kibum had a point. It really was so much better, especially once his own underwear was off and he could wrap his hand around both of them at once. And it was good—it was *really* good, and he could tell that Kibum was enjoying it too from the way his eyes were half-lidded and his cheeks were pink—but he didn’t just want good. He wanted Kibum to be a wreck in his hands.

He let go of them, ignoring Kibum’s, “Yah!” as he scooted down the bed and pushed Kibum’s knees up. He mouthed at the inside of Kibum’s knee and grinned down at him.

“Can I suck you?” he asked.

Instead of breathlessly saying, “Yes, obviously, of course,” Kibum demanded, “Have you ever sucked a dick before?”

“Actually, yes,” Minho said. “Lots!” He was exaggerating. He’d really only slept with one guy, a friend of a friend of his brother from college who he’d occasionally hook up with when he was home. But Kibum didn’t need to know that.

“Mm, okay,” Kibum said, skepticism in every line of his body.

“What, you don’t believe me?” Minho ran his hands up Kibum’s calves, tickling lightly at the backs of his knees. “I’ll prove it.”

“This is not a dick sucking competition!” Kibum said.

“Sounds like the words of someone who’s going to lose the dick sucking competition,” Minho said. He bowed his head again and began to kiss his way up to Kibum’s cock.

Minho paused when he reached faint, silvery scars along the insides of Kibum’s thighs. Kibum watched him, lower lip between his teeth, brow furrowed like he thought Minho might change his mind. Minho lowered his head to kiss the longest one, then ran his tongue along it to the end. He bit down lightly, then began to suck at Kibum’s skin, the faint salt of a day’s sweat sharp in his mouth. Kibum’s hand settled in Minho’s hair.

“Minho,” he whispered. “Are you trying to mark me up, baby?”

Minho didn’t think that warranted a response given it was pretty clear that yes, he was. Instead, he bit down lightly, and was gratified to hear Kibum finally moan. He spent longer than was strictly necessary soothing the bite with his tongue, but the way Kibum was beginning to move beneath him, like he couldn’t help himself, was too intoxicating for him to stop.

“Minho,” Kibum said finally. His voice was starting to sound raw. “I thought you said you were going to suck my *dick*.”

“Mm, yeah, I did.” Minho pressed one last kiss to the red mark blooming on Kibum’s pale skin and turned his attention to Kibum’s cock. He took a moment to stretch his jaw—it really

had been a while and he didn't want to show up on set with a popping jaw and no reasonable explanation for it—before taking the slick head into his mouth.

Kibum sighed. "Mm, yeah, baby, that's it." He rested one hand in Minho's hair, rubbing a thumb behind his ear. Minho's dick twitched. "Show me how good you are."

Minho pulled back for a moment to get his bearings as Kibum continued to stroke his head. Minho sucked at the tip, then took him in until the blunt head was at the back of his throat. Kibum groaned, thighs tensing up. Minho's chest swelled with smug pride.

Considering that Kibum was the loudest person Minho had ever met, he was surprisingly quiet even when Minho could tell from the flex of his muscles and the steadily stronger taste on his tongue that he was enjoying himself. But Minho didn't just want Kibum to enjoy himself; he wanted him wrecked. Maybe that was a little ambitious considering Minho hadn't sucked a dick in years, but he was going to give it his best shot.

"*Ah*," Kibum gasped as Minho trailed his fingers down to his balls, teasing at them with a light touch. Gratified, Minho did it again, letting the lube from earlier ease his way. When he ran his index finger down Kibum's perineum, Kibum actually moaned, hips jerking up. Minho coughed around Kibum's cock and pulled back to clear his throat.

"Can't take it, baby?" Kibum asked, a little mean, a little teasing. He stroked Minho's jaw—his way of an apology—then guided him back down. "Try again."

"You're such an asshole," Minho said before deliberately tonguing at the damp tip. Kibum swore, hand jerking across Minho's cheek and leaving a scratch behind. "Oh, what? Can't handle it?"

"Shut the fuck up," Kibum said, and he pushed at the back of Minho's head until Minho swallowed his cock again.

Now that Minho knew some of what could make Kibum lose his control, he exploited that knowledge for all it was worth until Kibum was actually making continuous, audible sounds. Leaving his thumb to rub circles against Kibum's perineum, he followed the slick trail of lube to the cleft of Kibum's ass. Kibum actually fisted his hand in Minho's hair at that, his cock leaking into Minho's mouth. Minho, emboldened, pressed the tip of his index finger against Kibum's hole, just the lightest intrusion.

"Fuck," Kibum gasped. He yanked Minho off his cock as he started to come, pulsing hot over Minho's mouth and chin. Minho stroked him through it, deliriously satisfied at how Kibum kept rocking back into his hand like he wanted Minho to properly finger him before jerking back. When it seemed like Kibum was finished coming, Minho gave him one last squeeze and sat up, eyebrows raised.

"How was that?" he asked. His voice was raspier than he'd expected; he would have to drink some tea in the morning if it didn't go away.

Kibum, his face and chest flushed, glared at him. "Fine," he said. "That was adequate."

“Adequate?” Minho squawked. “Come on, for our first blowjob that was pretty good.”

Kibum’s expression softened. “For a first one, yeah.” He dragged his fingers along the scratch he’d left, then to the mess on Minho’s face. “Fuck, you’re so hot.”

Minho barely had a chance to preen before Kibum was sitting up and climbing into his lap. Minho flung an arm around Kibum’s waist to keep him from slipping off as Kibum kissed him, hard and filthy, licking up his own come from Minho’s mouth, which was so fucking hot Minho thought he might die.

Kibum bit his upper lip and said, “You sucked my dick so good, baby.” He shoved a hand between their bodies and grabbed Minho’s cock tightly. Minho nearly choked on his own spit at the sudden spike of pleasure that jolted through him. Kibum dipped his head and dug his teeth into Minho’s neck, which was definitely a bad idea but at the moment Minho couldn’t think why.

“*Hyung*,” Minho whined, then snapped his mouth shut in mortification. Too late; Kibum had heard.

“Oh, Minho-ssi,” Kibum murmured into his ear. “Hyung will take care of you.”

Minho promptly came all over Kibum’s hand.

Kibum burst into laughter as Minho shuddered through his orgasm, burying his face in Minho’s shoulder as he shook. When Minho had caught his breath, he knocked Kibum back onto the bed, straddling him and pinning his arms over his head.

“Yah!” Minho pressed down a little harder as Kibum continued to laugh. “You’re never going to let this go, are you?”

Kibum surged up against Minho’s grip and kissed him hard before collapsing back down. “Nope,” he said, beaming.

Kibum was so beautiful when he smiled. Minho leaned down to kiss his slight hint of a dimple and told him so, pleased when Kibum squirmed a little in response.

“You’re so cheesy,” Kibum said. “Look, you’re making my hands shrivel up.”

Minho moved from holding Kibum’s wrists to holding his hands. “I guess I’ll have to protect them,” he said.

“Ugh, that’s even worse,” Kibum said, but he let Minho kiss him again, their bare legs twining together as they lazily made out on the rumpled sheets. Kibum was softer somehow, like his edges had been blurred out. He didn’t squirm or blush when Minho left soft kisses along his collar and shoulders, didn’t even make any more jokes.

Instead, he took Minho’s face between his hands and looked him directly in the eye. “I love you,” he said. Simple. No smiles or jokes. Just his bared heart, held out for Minho to take.

Minho bit his cheek and blinked hard against the well of joy and affection and some amount of sadness. “I love you too,” he said, and then he kissed Kibum until they were both breathless.

The first time they kissed was right after Kibum told the rest of the group that he was gay. He announced it with crossed arms and a mulish expression, practically daring any of them to say something about it, but he couldn’t hide the way he was shaking.

Jinki patted him awkwardly on the back and thanked him for trusting them; Taemin just said, “Okay, hyung,” but he *was* just a kid; Jonghyun wrapped Kibum in a tight hug and whispered something in his ear that made Kibum’s eyes go watery; and Minho did absolutely nothing at all.

He *wanted* to say something; by then he knew Kibum well enough to recognize how hard it would have been for him to bare himself like this. But he didn’t know what to say, couldn’t think of anything, his thoughts turning into static as his gaze traveled from Kibum’s clenched fists to his clenched jaw.

He made the mistake of meeting Kibum’s eyes then, and saw that Kibum was staring at him intensely, eyes narrowed. Waiting for what he would say. Seemingly bracing himself. Any words Minho might have said dried up in his mouth.

“Well,” Kibum said finally. “That’s all. I want the bedroom to myself for a while.” He whirled around and stomped off, the bedroom door rattling as he slammed it shut.

As soon as he was gone, Jinki and Jonghyun turned on Minho as one and glared. Taemin was looking between them all, worrying his lower lip with his teeth, looking extremely fifteen. Minho straightened, his stomach twisting with sourceless anxiety.

Jonghyun rocked forward on his feet and said, “What was that, Minho-ssi?”

“Are we going to have a problem?” Jinki asked, voice uncharacteristically stern.

“We’d better not having a fucking problem,” Jonghyun said. He frowned at Minho, seeming disappointed. “Minho?”

“No!” Minho yelped. “No problem!” He took a breath. “I don’t know what to say. He surprised me.”

Which was only half true. Since joining SM, Minho had met a number of people whose sexualities weren’t openly discussed but *were* widely known. He’d had his suspicions about Kibum since they had met, but figured it wasn’t his business. He had gotten used to the idea of it being this silent *thing*. And now—now it wasn’t.

“Thank him for telling us,” Jonghyun said. “Or congratulate him, or literally anything to make him know that he’s *safe*.”

That jolted Minho into action. “Oh,” he said. “Oh—hyung, you’re right.”

Jinki pointed at the door to the bedroom. “Go fix this now,” he said.

“Ah, hyung is putting on his leader hat,” Jonghyun said, breaking some of the tension. “That’s how you know it’s serious.”

Minho smiled slightly. His palms were already starting to sweat. Kibum wasn’t going to make it easy on him; he never did. “Okay,” he said. “I’m going.”

He knocked on the door as a warning before letting himself in. Kibum was up in his bunk, laying flat on his back and staring up.

“I thought I said I wanted the room to myself,” Kibum said. Then he looked over and saw Minho. “Oh. It’s you.”

Minho picked his way over to the bed and sat in his bunk beneath Kibum’s. “I’m sorry,” he said, looking down at his bedspread. “I didn’t mean to—I didn’t know what to say. I’m, um, honored you trust us?”

“I’m questioning that a bit right now,” Kibum said acidly.

“You shouldn’t,” Minho said immediately. “Because I don’t care. Or, I guess I do care? But only because it’s part of who you are.” He shifted to lay flat on his back and stared at the bottom of Kibum’s bunk. “I’m sorry I froze.”

“Whatever,” Kibum said, which was as close as “I forgive you” as he ever got.

They both went quiet for a while, Minho idly tracing patterns on the underside of the top bunk. Then, before he could really think about what he was saying, Minho blurted out, “So what’s it like kissing a guy?”

There was a pause. Then Kibum’s head appeared, upside down, as he dangled down from the top bunk to stare incredulously at Minho. “Seriously? That’s what you’re asking me right now?”

Minho stared back at him. “Yeah?”

Kibum let out a huge, dramatic sigh, and withdrew. A moment later came the familiar sounds of Kibum descending the ladder between their bunks, followed by Kibum crawling into Minho’s bunk and sitting on his hip.

“Ow,” Minho said.

“If you’re really curious and aren’t just asking a stupid question,” Kibum said, “why don’t you actually *try* it sometime?”

“Uh,” Minho said, pushing himself up onto his elbows. “What?”

“I’ve never kissed a girl, so I can’t compare,” Kibum said. “So really *you* should go kiss a boy and tell *me* what the difference is.”

Minho looked at Kibum's mouth, then realized what he was doing and looked up instead. "Are you volunteering?"

"Are you asking?" Kibum shot back.

Minho's hand had, at some point, moved to Kibum's knee to steady him. Kibum was wearing ripped jeans; when Minho moved his fingers just a bit, he could touch Kibum's skin. When Minho dared to look back at Kibum's face, it was to find Kibum gazing at him steadily, face pink but set. Minho gave a short, nearly invisible nod.

They met in the middle, both of them hesitant until their lips actually touched. Minho felt like he'd been electrocuted, every inch of his body alert and aware, begging him to take in every bit of this. The slight rawness of Kibum's lower lip. The weight of him, shifting from Minho's hip to straddle his legs instead. The soft skin of Kibum's knee beneath Minho's fingers.

Minho mindlessly wrapped his free arm around Kibum's waist, pulling him in, letting Kibum kiss him deeper and more fervently. It was just a kiss except for how it wasn't; Minho couldn't put his finger on the difference, but it felt *more* than anything he'd felt before, and not just because Kibum's tongue was in his mouth.

"Yah! Did you guys make up or not?" came Jonghyun's voice from outside the door.

They broke apart hastily, Kibum dragging the back of his hand over his mouth. He looked undeniably kissed; Minho liked it.

"We're fine, hyung," Kibum called back. "Just talking."

He climbed back over Minho to get out of the bunk. Minho caught his hand on instinct, not wanting him to go. Kibum looked down at their linked hands, then deliberately pulled away.

Minho was just starting to feel sex-drowsy, the warm weight of Kibum on his chest pinning him down, when Kibum abruptly sat up. Minho frowned, pushing himself up onto his elbows.

"Kibum-ssi," he said warily. "What is it?"

"Ugh," Kibum said, kicking the sheets down toward the end of the bed. "I *just* washed these. You're gonna have to help me change them."

Minho looked at the almost entirely pristine sheets. "We didn't even get them that dirty," he said. "Can't this wait until morning?"

"Ew, no." Kibum grabbed Minho's hand and started pulling. "Come on. Go shower while I get these off."

Minho stumbled off the bed and stood there in confusion as Kibum began to strip the bed. Kibum glanced over and rolled his eyes.

"*Go*," he said. "I'll be right there."

Minho perked up at that and nodded before heading into Kibum's ensuite. He was cautiously sniffing at Kibum's fancy shampoo when Kibum slid open the glass door and stepped into the shower with him, wrapping his arms around Minho's waist. Even though Minho had been expecting him, even though Kibum had *said* he'd be right there—Minho's chest felt like it might burst from joy.

"Hi," Minho said. He took one of Kibum's hands and kissed his knuckles.

Kibum groaned and pressed his face into Minho's back. "You're going to drive me insane, aren't you? Did I really commit to this—this *passion*?"

"You didn't seem to mind that passion earlier," Minho said. Kibum's arms tightened around him.

"I suppose I did finally find a good use for your competitiveness," Kibum said. He bit lightly at Minho's shoulder blade before reaching past him for the scrubber. "Don't let it go to your head."

They got distracted from washing up several times, but eventually made it out of the shower and back to the bedroom, where Kibum gave Minho some old clothes before bullying Minho into helping him with the new set of sheets. Afterward, they let the dogs into the room and curl up together on the bed. Minho cuddled Garcons to his chest and watched Kibum make kissy faces at CommesDes.

"What?" Kibum asked when he caught Minho looking.

"Is this what we're doing now?" Minho pressed his nose into Garcons's curls so he didn't have to look directly at Kibum. "This is real?"

Kibum sobered up, taking CommeDes off his lap and turning to face Minho directly. "Aish, this guy. You know me better than that."

"I guess I'm just wondering what changed your mind," Minho said. "Back before—you always kept it from going further."

Kibum nodded. "Yeah. I know." He put his hands on Minho's knees, rubbing gently. "I have this habit of denying myself things I know I'll love because it'll hurt when it's gone. And—I said I was going to live better, but I've still been keeping that part back. I don't want to anymore."

Minho put Garcons down and leaned in to kiss Kibum. When they parted, Kibum made a face and picked a piece of fur off his mouth.

"Gross," he said.

"They're *your* dogs," Minho said.

"Mm, no, honey, I think they're ours now."

“When did I agree to that?” Minho demanded. “We just confessed and I’m already a step-parent?”

“We raised Taeminnie and he came out all right,” Kibum said.

Minho laughed and kissed Kibum again, longer this time. Garcons, impatient, wriggled out of his hold and leapt off the bed to join his brother. After, Minho brushed the hair away from Kibum’s forehead and kissed him there too.

“If you’re trying to tell me that you’re in this for the long haul,” Minho said, “I am too.”

Minho watched in amusement as Kibum visibly held back whatever flippant comment he had ready for that. “This guy,” he said instead, soft and affectionate. He didn’t finish the thought, but he didn’t really need to. Minho understood what he meant.

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